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563 depends on his herds: they are his only resource, his only
233 wealth, and his only pride. When two nomads meet, whether
(52) they are Kazakhs, Kirghiz, Mongols, or Tibetans, the first
(55) subject that comes up is their cattle. Among nomads, social
(42) status is established by the possession of horses, camels,
and livestock in general, and only secondarily determined
by titles or descent. This is especially true for the Kirghiz,
Kazakhs and Tibetans, and to a lesser degree for the
Mongols, among whom aristocratic birth (real or imagined)
plays an important role.

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(342) The average nomad's life can be described as follows: he
(352) lives in a roomy felt tent, furnished with house altar, in the
(353) case of Buddhists, or with an artistically made book-stand
for the Quran in the case of Muslims, and some chests and
carpets. The whole family takes care of the livestock, and
periodically the migration unit moves during the summer time
from pasture to pasture, preserving the richest and most
(62) protected grazing land for the winter time. The weather
plays a fatal role in the welfare of the nomad's livestock, and
every so often a migration unit (the ail, the aul, the ayir,
the omoq, otoq, xotn, or uruq, the ulus or even the aimaq)
loses its livestock. In this case, those clans which still own
enough livestock divide their herds and lend part of them to
those who suffered the loss. Collective cooperation is exer-
(14) cised in this respect by Kazakhs, Kirghiz and Mongols,
(426) while the nomadic Tibetans, in a similar situation, have quite
(476) a reputation for robbing neighboring tribes of their livestock.

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563 The nomadic way of life, the close contact with nature and
771 dependence on nature promotes animism, shamanism, and spir-
itualism, which goes hand in hand with the prevailing religions
of Islam (in the case of the Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Salars, and
some Tibetan clans) and Buddhism (in the case of the Mongols,
Tibetans, and Sarigh-Uighurs). As a general rule, the nomadic
Kirghiz and Kazakh are not very fanatic or ardent Muslims, and
neither are the Mongols very pious Buddhists, but still, both
feel strongly about their religious although they are rather lax
in their observance. No matter how poor a Buddhistic nomad
(772) is, he voluntarily supports and feeds wandering lamas,
(774) invites several on major occasions (birth, death, and marriage
if the bride's father can afford it), pays them, and finally is
accustomed to the old tradition of giving a small percentage of
his livestock every year to Buddhistic monasteries. All
nomads are very superstitious, and the relationship between
cause and effect is often misinterpreted, e.g., in the case
of disease or weather. It is safe to say that the dominant
motives of the nomads are economic in the first place and
religious in the second place.

THE CITY OF TEMPLES

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The population, as in all these cities of the North-West, is largely composed of Chinese from distant provinces who hold the main part of the trade in their hands. The Kansu man is the agriculturalist, but each village-centre offers scope for the trading capacity of a Honan or Shensi man, who opens a small shop in which he does a large business as grain-merchant and money-lender. The farmer values the services of this fellow-countryman, who helps him out of many difficulties, but hates the oppression of the Tungkan or Huei Huei—by which name the Chinese Moslem is known. The origin of the Huei Huei is disputable; they are a vigorous race of men, to whom the Chinese Government at one time made grants of land. They entrenched themselves in South Kansu, were responsible for the Moham-medan rebellion and massacres, and though quelled for a time they have so reasserted themselves as to now hold many of the important official positions in the North-West. Their regiments are feared by the local people, from whom they seize produce, grain, and animals, requiting them with personal violence if they dare to question the right of might.

An illustration of the high-handed dealings of the Huei Huei is supplied by the incidents which brought one of our women students into the Christian circle. She, a young woman with one small child, was married to an elderly man, who was both an opium-smoker and a gambler. Their little home was in a courtyard which backed Dr. Kao's dispensary. Her husband, after losing all his money in a gamble with a Huei Huei, put her up as the stake, and lost. She came to know of this, and when her husband spoke of going away from home for a few days, knew at once that this was a prearranged plan for the Moslem to come and claim her. She had no redress nor court of appeal, so she

A PRODIGAL SON

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Part of the complicated debt-system in which the whole of China's financial organisation is involved, is the general settlement of accounts, which takes place in the last month of the year. A son's inheritance of debt often exceeds the property devolving on him by the death of his father, which debt he hands on in turn to his own children. A creditor always claims large interest, which is due to be paid in the twelfth moon, but in order to collect the amount the problem is when and how to find the debtor. For many are the subterfuges and evasions practised by the impecunious, when the voice of the unwelcome visitor is heard in the distance—back-doors, roof-apertures, gaps in walls, all come in handy, and 'not at home' is the usual policy! During the final five days, the city is noisy throughout with the sounds of wrangling, quarelling and violent invectives, the uproar increasing in a regular *crescendo* until the appointed time when each family must gather within its own walls, to observe the religious rites necessary for the auspicious ushering in of the New Year. From this moment, suddenly, everything changes! Men, who a few hours before were heaping curses on each other's heads, now meet with urbane countenances, and exchange bows suitable for a Court function. Cordial greetings are also mutually expressed, and as with a sponge all animosities are, apparently, wiped off the slate of memory, while the whole population gives itself over to merry-making and feasting.

Long before dawn we were awakened by the sound of bursting crackers; temple-bells were clanging, gongs were booming, and the subtle perfume of incense crept into our room. As soon as the doors were opened, every man in the compound, dressed in his best clothes, came in to pay his respects, and from then onwards, throughout the day, we received visits of ceremony from all our

000 even met by a sergeant with soldiers (Plate XLII). This time the city of Dankar put at my disposal the amban gung kwan, that is, the hotel of the governor of Northeast Tibet, and scarcely had I arrived there when the ting and the sie tai called on me and apologized profusely, also in the name of the amban for the attack on me and straightway blamed the hsiē dia who had most carelessly sent a very inferior employee of theirs along with me, who, they said, knew nothing at all about how to deal with Tibetans. /205/ I was assured that the hsiē dia would quickly adjust the matter and return everything I had lost. I heard various answers to my question as to who the robbers could have been. It seemed that there was still uncertainty on that point.

On January 22 I was again back in Hsining fu. For the journey from Dankar to Hsining fu I was given an escort consisting of ten armed horsemen. Meanwhile, in Hsining fu where my large baggage was stored, the instruments from Europe had arrived which were to replace those that had been stolen at Hu peh. They were now more than welcome, for in the Koko Nor attack I had lost a few more of the reserve instruments. Through the kind intervention of the consul general of Shanghai the new supplies had, after many delays, been sent to this remote corner of the earth where at that time no one knew anything about mail. I was less fortunate in Hsining fu with my cook Liu. A day after my return, after he had heard me say that I would again travel into Tibet, he disappeared in the night without a word and also without asking for his back pay and the travel money still due him. Later Father van Dyk told me that he appeared in Lanchow fu as though he were still being chased by robbers and there told, still completely horrified, of the dreadful cold at Lake Koko Nor. The poor fellow was completely beside himself as a result of the night of terror and the Tibetans at his throat.

527 On January 25 the Chinese New Year began, and this, as is
 426 well-known, is the only Chinese holiday on which all businesses
 454 are closed. Thus, everyone had to get his entire supplies for a week on the preceding days. But I had difficulty in getting assistance from my Hsining men and even in catching a glimpse of them. Like the rest of the inhabitants of the city, they, too, were busy all day cashing in old debts and paying their own. By far the greatest number of Chinese do not own a penny of savings, to say nothing of capital, and so almost everyone in the course of the year runs out of cash at some point and is obliged to borrow.

However, it is an ancient custom that debts must be paid the last day of the year. Now, any half-way decent object owned by a Chinese family must serve to plug up the old gaps on these last days of the year. Thus, many heads of families came to me also, and offered me for sale all kinds of curios and things, in fact, some of them brought their creditors and the creditors of their creditors along and hardly had I bought a thing when they began subtracting among themselves. For days the pawn shops of the city were crowded with customers until midnight. Lucky the man who has plenty of cash on New Year's Day in China! 527 426 454

On New Year's eve the city was surprisingly quiet. The city is too poor for the noisy demonstrations that take place annually in Shanghai and other coastal cities. Large firecrackers went off rather seldom. Toward morning one heard a few more petards, because on New Year's eve all ghosts are on the loose. Only the pawn shops were continually busy. Far into the night one could see Chinese loitering about outside them, many a one defended himself with his fists against an all-too obstinate creditor who was on the point of forcing him on that bitter-cold winter's night /206/ "to sell the shirt on his back." 527 426

Many of the pawnshop customers, after they had paid their debts or collected the necessary cash, immediately wanted to redeem their gala clothes for the forthcoming holidays, even at that late hour.

In the inn which I occupied there lived a large Chinese family diagonally across from me, who made such a racket all during the night of New Year's eve that I did not sleep a wink. Half a dozen creditors had gradually assembled there, all of whom demanded to be paid. The man quietly explained to each one in turn that he was unable to pay at the moment but that he would do so within the next few months. None of the creditors was satisfied with this. After the first eloquent remonstrances, each one of them let his glance travel over useful objects in the dwelling and then suddenly demanded this or that object as a deposit or substitute. But it was not easy for any of them to obtain anything. For hours the parties wrangled over things until the head of the house finally gave in. Early the next morning the entire apartment was cleaned out, even their blankets were gone and the private bailiffs had even torn the wife's jacket off her body. The spectacle was pitiful. But when day dawned, when no more creditors could be expected, when all were congratulating one another with "gung schi!" "gung schi!", 426

426 then my friends, too, appeared dressed in silks and velvets and all their children, as good breeding demanded, wore new shoes. I now learned that the man had been cautious enough to store a few chests of his belongings in my little courtyard, with the help of my servants, and he had now brought them back to his apartment again. Nor was the man by any means bankrupt. All he lacked at the moment was cash to cover all his debts.

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574 At the first cock's crow, long before day, my servants came back from the New Year's celebration with their families and offered me their New Year's kowtow for which one's employees always receive a major gift of money. The first official callers, among them the hsien and a few officers of the city who were acquaintances of mine, also stood at my door at six in the morning just as the sun was rising. They were on their way back from the temples where they had delivered offerings and congratulations to the official state deities and the emperor. In China I learned the meaning of New Year's calls on acquaintances, and good luck wishes. Surely no Chinese would be impressed by our European manner of doing this. Beginning with the first day of the new year, the inhabitants of China are on their feet from morning till night and hasten from one to the other of their acquaintances in order to express their good wishes in the form of a kowtow. On the morning of New Year's day everyone washes
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777 his face and appears in holiday garb which should be new if possible, and all doors, all door posts and implements are freshly pasted with luck-bringing words and sayings. The paper which is used for this is fire-red, unless the family happens to be in mourning. (1) Thus,

1. Like the color of the Yang, see footnote to p. 33.

on New Year's in China everything looks pretty and orderly, and above all, indescribably gay. On my house, too, the servants had during the night pasted new pictures of the gate deities on the outside of all the doors, and over the hearth they had put a fresh picture of the kitchen /207/ god Ts'ao ye (1), and when I awoke there was

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792 1. Also called Ts'ao wang ye. This is the chief deity of the family. He is below the city god and the almighty god of heaven, the supreme Chinese deity, and of course, also below the emperor, the son of heaven. He guards the fire and the domestic hearth. On the twenty-third or twenty-fourth day of the last calendar month he ascends to heaven

583 and without a word he took me by the arm and led me along behind the farmer, to a house a few doors away. There the farmer threw the silver he had got for the mules on a table and roughly seized a middle-aged woman who protested in vain and who had evidently been sitting in front of the door, quite unsuspecting. He quickly lifted the woman onto his horse and hurried off with her toward the nearest city gate. Twilight had already descended. He escaped just before the gates were barred. The Chinese who witnessed the drama laughed aloud while the woman covered her face with her hands and sobbed loudly and bitterly. My guide explained to me, laughingly: "For your two mules the man has got himself this faded woman, a widow." It is not considered respectable to marry widows, and so no wedding is celebrated, nor guests invited. The new husband pays a certain price to the family of the deceased or to whomever the woman belongs, and departs with her from her old home, if possible in the dark and without causing much stir. If the widow is self-respecting and well brought up, she leaves her old home with tears streaming, even though she may be heartily glad to get away from it.

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682 Around the same time there occurred another incident which is typical of the sense of justice of the Hsining people. The secretary of a yamen owed a certain bank five tael and left this small debt unpaid in spite of repeated admonishment. The owner of the bank thereupon sent one of his employees who demanded payment. But since the man either could not or would not pay, there was a lively altercation and the debtor suddenly took a knife and cut off a finger of his left hand, threw it to the young man and said "There's your money!" I was told that the blood balanced the debt. However, both parties were now so aroused that the quarrel continued and the employee was thoroughly thrashed by the secretary and members of his family. In his distress the employee kicked the secretary in such a way that the latter collapsed unconscious and died two days later. The wife of the secretary then went to the hsien and accused the bank employee of the murder of her husband. The hsien had the young man seized and would probably have beheaded him if his family had not demanded payment of 2,000 tael by the bank for the loss of their son. Finally the hsien (the father-mother-mandarin) decided that the bank should pay the secretary's widow 600 taels and thus redeem the young employee. Inasmuch as the "bank" had to pay the hsien for court expenses besides, the owner of the bank was on the point of bankruptcy when I left Hsining fu - all for 5 taels.